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On the Cover: Photo collage of #2 Johnny Manziel throughout his career as an Aggie football player. Photos by Rob Havens '88.



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Howdy Ags!

On Wednesday, January 8th, the confirmation came that I feared but expected as Johnny Manziel declared his intentions to make himself available for this year's NFL Draft. It took me back to the 12-12-12 celebration on the steps of the MSC when fans chanted at Damontre Moore and Luke Joeckel, "One More Year!"

As Johnny stepped to the mic with his Heisman Trophy nearby, he raised three fingers, reminding everyone that he still had three years left. The crowd went wild, but I knew that, even though that would be awesome, it was highly unlikely. I believed this season would probably be his last in an Aggie uniform, and so, as I covered this year from spring to the Chick-Fil-A Bowl, I kept reminding myself to soak it all in as this was probably the last time I'd get to shoot the legend that became Johnny Football.

The special commemorative cover of this issue is a collection of pictures I shot this year as I covered Johnny and chronicled the history-making moments he gave us. I remember the first time he appeared in our magazine as a phenomenal, young quarterback recruit from Tivy High School that was putting up Play Station-type numbers. AI called him "Johnny Rocket"! After a redshirt season and two amazing years leading the Aggie offense, he rides off into the sunset leaving Aggieland in much better shape than when he arrived. Not only does his legacy include all of the records he broke and the huge wins he gave us, but he has also given us national appeal. I'm sad to see him go, but I can definitely understand his decision and wish him well!

Johnny made everyone around him better. The coaches he played against said they have never seen a better competitor or a more exciting player in all of their years of coaching. We are all fortunate to be Aggie fans during this special time. We thank Johnny for all that he did for the program, and I know that he will continue to promote Texas A&M as he moves into the pros. We wish him the best!

Gig'em Ags!

Rob '88



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Aggieland Illustrated is an independently owned, Aggie owned and operated publication and in no way reflects the views or opinions of Texas A&M University.

Aggieland Illustrated (ISSN 1932-9105) is published six times a year in the United States by Aggieland Illustrated, PO Box 6841, Bryan, TX 77805-6841. Reproduction or use of editorial or graphics content in any manner without permission is prohibited. Photographs and manuscripts for publication are welcome but will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Address all subscription inquiries and change of address requests to Aggieland Illustrated, PO Box 6841, Bryan, TX 77805-6841. Allow up to eight weeks for response.

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Volume 8, Number 4

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snapshot



12th man historic blocked punt

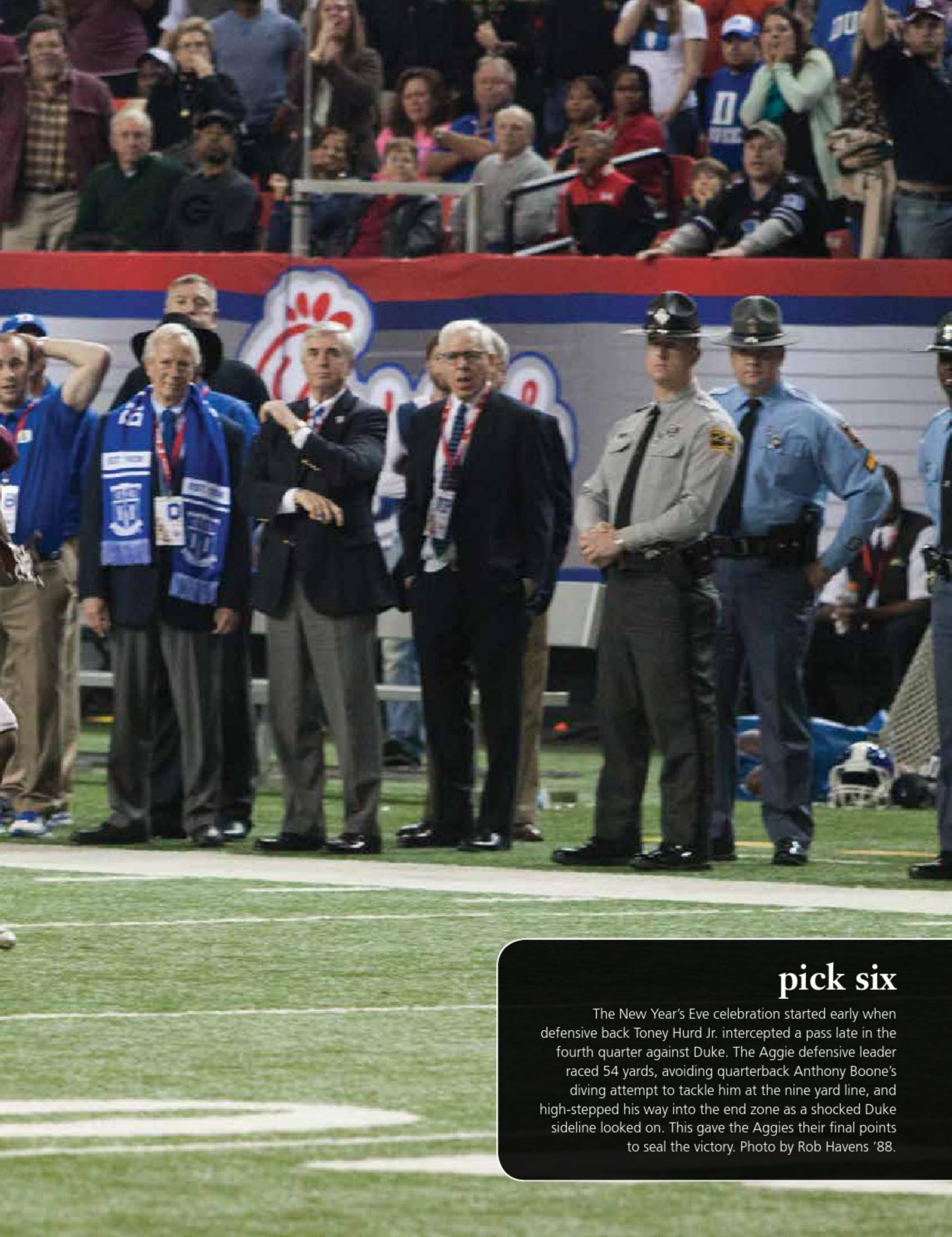
With the game knotted at seven, 12th Man Sam Moeller swallowed up this Mississippi State punt that rolled out of the end zone for a safety. It was the first time that a member of the 12th Man walk-on squad had blocked a punt in a game. This gave Texas A&M much-needed momentum and the Ags went on to beat the Bulldogs 51-41.

Photo by Rob Havens '88.



snapshot





pick six

The New Year's Eve celebration started early when defensive back Toney Hurd Jr. intercepted a pass late in the fourth quarter against Duke. The Aggie defensive leader raced 54 yards, avoiding quarterback Anthony Boone's diving attempt to tackle him at the nine yard line, and high-stepped his way into the end zone as a shocked Duke sideline looked on. This gave the Aggies their final points to seal the victory. Photo by Rob Havens '88.

big man slam!

Junior center Kourtney Roberson finishes with authority! The Aggies jumped out to a 3-0 SEC record with the help of Roberson, who leads the team in offensive and defensive rebounds. Playing in every game so far, Roberson has been a consistent inside presence and is second on the team in scoring. Photos by Rob Havens '88.







5 Star speedy noil

Aggies Snag #1 Wide Receiver in the Country!

BY ROB HAVENS '88

The offseason started off with a bang for Texas A&M as Speedy Noil committed to play for the Aggies at the Under Armour All-America Game. The 5'11", 180-pound product from New Orleans is listed as the top wide receiver in the nation. Pursued by several schools around the country, he eventually narrowed his choices to LSU and Texas A&M. Both schools coveted the talented wide receiver early on in the recruiting process and the Ags were ecstatic to get his verbal commit.

Speedy earns his nickname every time he steps on the field. Watching his film, you can tell he was easily the best player on the field in just about every game. His break-away speed and elusiveness will remind Aggie fans of another #2 that evaded defensive players on Kyle Field.

Defensive coordinators will find it

difficult to try to game-plan against him using one-on-one coverage. Once he finds a crease in the defense, there will be few players in college football that will be able to catch him. Noil, who played quarterback, running back, returner, and wide receiver in high school is already on campus, and with a spring football campaign under his belt, he should compete for instant playing time this fall. A young man with this much talent will be hard to keep off the field.

Combining world-class speed and ankle-breaking agility, Speedy is sure to make an immediate impact on the Aggie offense. As for all the fans with #2 jerseys out there, you will be able to continue to wear them proudly as Noil is sure to continue the success of the most popular number (besides 12, of course) in Aggieland.



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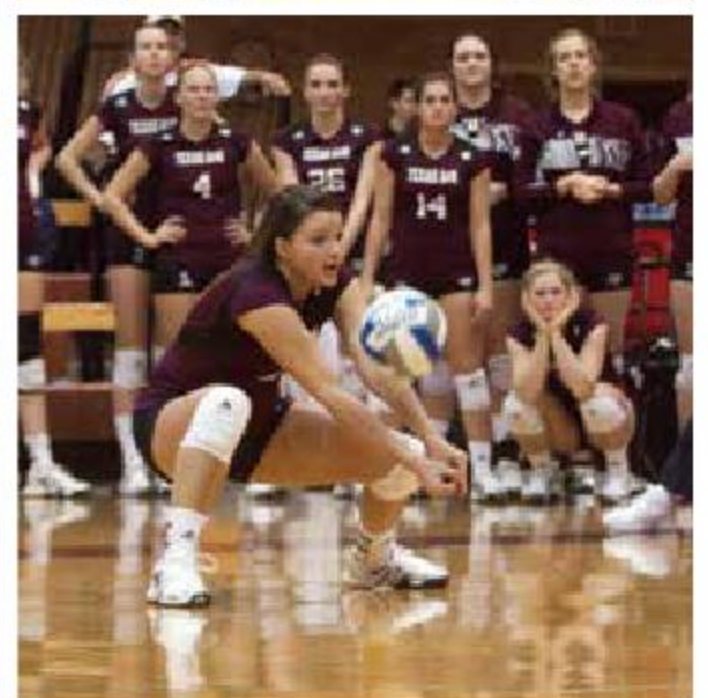
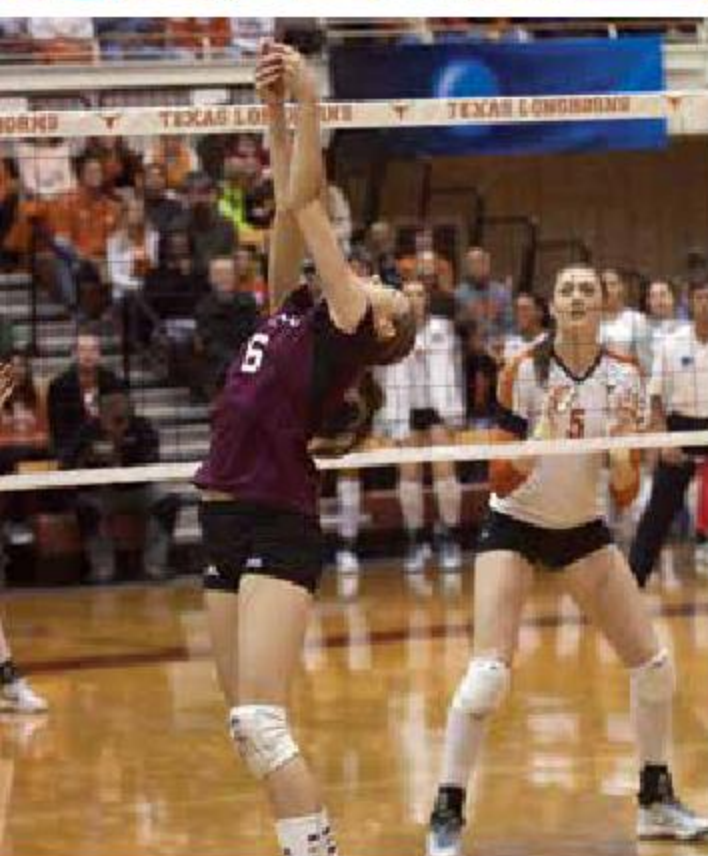
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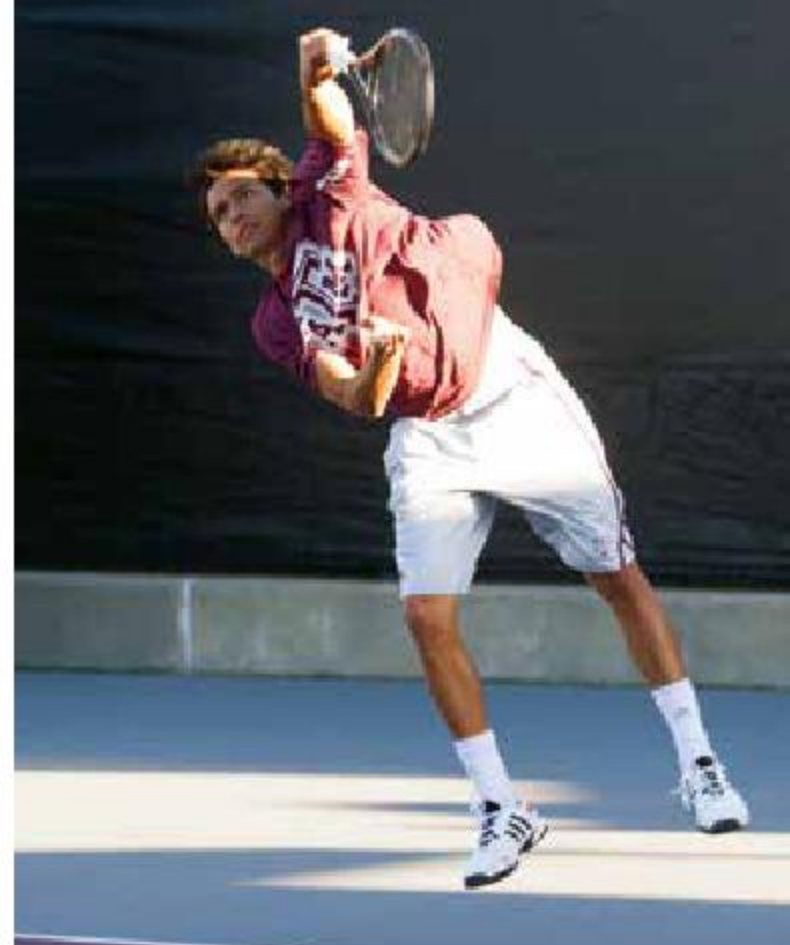
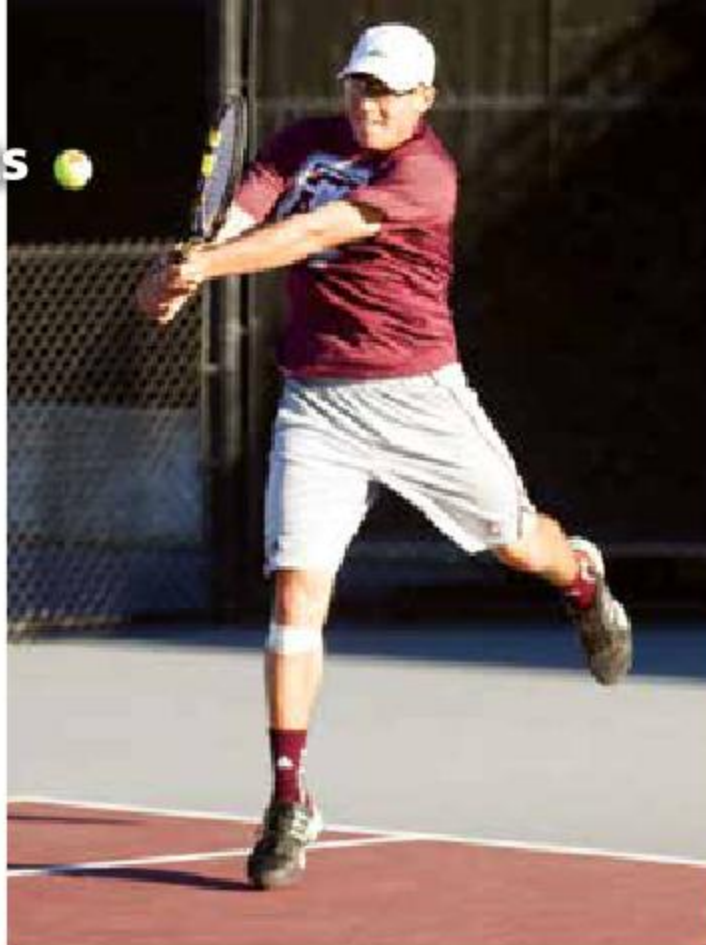
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(women's basketball) The Aggie Women's Basketball Team is looking like a well-oiled machine. Currently on a nine-game winning streak, the Aggies are undefeated in conference play and are positioning themselves for a high seed in the NCAA tournament. The Aggies are deep, athletic, and can beat teams from the inside or the outside. Their stingy defense is giving up less than 55 points per game, while the offense scores close to 70. Courtney Williams and Courtney Walker lead the team in scoring, while Achiri Ade and Karla Gilbert lead the team in rebounds. Jordan Jones has been consistent at the point, leading the Aggies in assists. We expect big things from this team in March. **(men's basketball)** Aggie Men's Basketball entered this season with several new faces, looking longer and more athletic than last year's squad. Alex Caruso, in his second year with the team, has led the Aggie offense while also leading the SEC in assists. Newcomer Jamal Jones leads the team in scoring, while junior Kourtney Roberson has been consistent in the paint, leading the team in both offensive and defensive rebounds. The Aggies jumped out to a 3-0 lead in conference play, but an overtime loss to Mississippi State, combined with losses to Kentucky and Vanderbilt, have the Aggies fighting to get back to their winning ways and secure an opportunity to play in the post season. **(volleyball)** The Aggie Volleyball Team earned a trip to Austin in the first and second rounds of the NCAA Tournament. After sweeping UTSA in the first round and celebrating on the home court of the University of Texas by sawing Varsity's horns off, the Aggies were rewarded with a shot at the number one seed and defending national champion Longhorn team. It looked like Texas might make quick work of our ladies after they breezed through the first two sets, but the Ags fought back, taking the third set 25-15 and giving the sips all they could handle before faltering 25-19 in the fourth set. The Aggies finished the season with a 19-12 record and posted a 10-8 record in the SEC. **(women's soccer)** The Aggie Soccer Team won both a share of the regular season SEC Championship and the SEC Tournament Championship. They earned the right to play at home for the first game and won an exciting overtime match against the Utah Utes, setting up a second-round match versus long-time rival Texas Tech in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. The Red Raiders gave the Aggies all they could handle and the two squads battled to a 2-2 score after two overtime periods. Jordan Day had two huge saves as the teams fought it out in penalty kicks, and the Ags triumphed 4-3 to make it into the Sweet 16. On a freezing cold day on the home turf of the multiple national-championship-winning Tar Heels, the Aggies played their hearts out but lost 2-0 to North Carolina. The Aggies ended their season 18-5-2 with a couple of SEC Championships! **(women's tennis)** Women's Tennis: Coming off a record year that concluded with a National Championship Runner-Up finish, the Aggies look to continue their winning ways, entering the spring as the number 7 team in the nation. They opened their 2014 season with a 4-1 win versus Mississippi State. The Aggies return five from last year's team, with the lone senior being Christina Stancu. The young but talented squad looks to repeat their success from last year and strives to take home an SEC Championship and a National Championship.





(men's tennis) The Men's Tennis Team opened its spring season ranked number 12 in the country. The Ags return six members from last year's squad that went 19-13 and made it to the round of 16. Number 13, Jeremy Efferding, and number 19, sophomore Harrison Adams, lead the team. Also returning is junior Shane Vinsant, who led the team last year with a 20-8 dual record. The Aggies got off to a perfect 4-0 record this spring and will open conference play on February 28th versus Florida. **(track & field)** Both the Men's and Women's Track and Field teams won their first meets of the spring. The women, ranked number 1, and the men, ranked number 2 coming into the spring, dominated against LSU and Texas Tech in a triangular meet that they hosted at the Gilliam Indoor Track Stadium. The Ags look to lead the nation with world-class athletes in the most successful program in Aggieland. The season will culminate in the SEC Indoor Championships, which the Aggies will host February 27th through March 1st, and the NCAA Indoor Championships in Albuquerque, NM in the middle of March.





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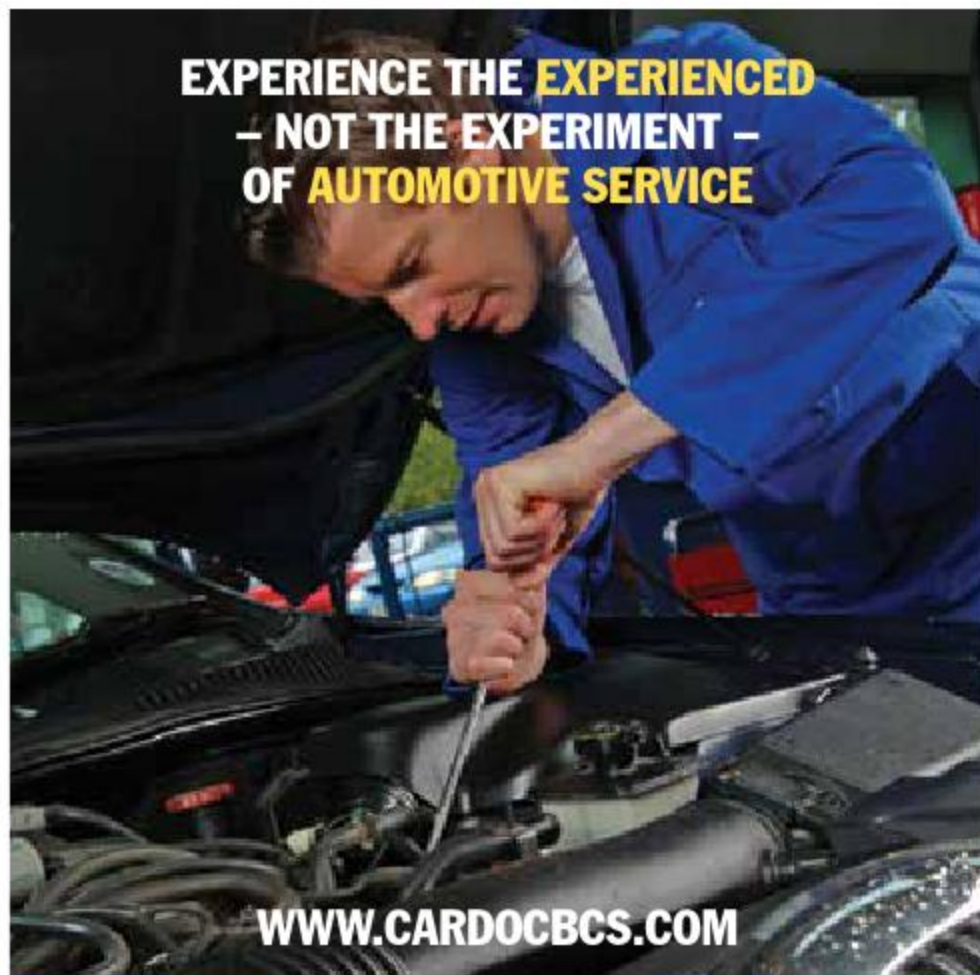
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1	 Jerrod Heard	Guyer	6-2	180
	Signed with Texas			

Running Backs (5)

1	 Varshaun Nixon	Lake Travis	5-10	185
	Signed with TCU			
2	 Kevin Shorter	Newton	6-0	190
	Signed with Texas			
3	 Justin Stockton	Steele	5-9	160
	Signed with TTU			
4	 Donald Catalon	Eisenhower	6-0	200
	Signed with Texas			
5	 Samaje Perine	Hendrickson	5-10	195
	Signed with OU			

Wide Receivers (5)

1	 Armanti Foreman	Texas City	5-11	175
	Signed with Texas			
2	 Davion Hall	Liberty-Eylau	6-3	185
	Signed with Baylor			
3	 KD Cannon	Mount Pleasant	6-1	160
	Signed with Baylor			
4	 Tony Upchurch	Dawson	6-2	180
	Signed with LSU			
5	 Lorenzo Joe Abilene	Cooper	6-2	180
	Signed with Texas			





Linebackers (8)

1	 Hoza Scott	La Porte	6-3	220
	Will Attend Blinn College			
2	 Edwin Freeman	Bowie	6-1	190
	Signed with Texas			
3	 Zach Whitley	North Shore	6-2	210
	Signed with UCLA			
4	 Josh Walker	Gilmer	6-1	220
	Signed with Texas A&M			
5	 Otaro Alaka	Cy-Falls	6-3	215
	Signed with Texas A&M			
6	 Silvester Hayes	South Oak Cliff	6-2	215
	Signed with Colorado State			
7	 Sam Sizelove	Argyle	6-1	205
	Signed with KSU			
8	 Cameron Hampton	Carter	6-2	205
	Signed with Texas			

Tight End (1)

1	 Mavin Saunders	Kinkaid	6-5	230
	Signed with FSU			

Defensive Ends (4)

1	 Myles Garrett	Arlington Martin	6-4	235
	Signed with Texas A&M			
2	 Solomon Thomas	Coppell	6-3	255
	Signed with Stanford			
3	 Derick Roberson	SA Brennan	6-3	215
	Signed with Texas			
4	 Jarrett Johnson	Seven Lakes	6-3	225
	Signed with Texas A&M			





Cornerbacks (6)

1	 Nick Harvey	FB Travis	5-11	180
	Signed with Texas A&M			
2	 Tony Brown	Ozen	6-0	190
	Signed with Alabama			
3	 Armani Watts	North Forney	5-11	185
	Signed with Texas A&M			
4	 Cedric Collins	Skyline	5-10	175
	Signed with Texas A&M			
5	 Nick Watkins	Bishop Dunne	6-0	165
	Signed with Notre Dame			
6	 Darrion Johnson	Navasota	5-10	185
	TEX, A&M, OU			


Safeties (6)

1	 Jamal Adams	Hebron	6-0	175
	Signed with LSU			
2	 Dylan Sumner-Gardner	West Mesquite	6-0	190
	Signed with Boise St			
3	 Edward Paris	Timberview	6-1	190
	Signed with LSU			
4	 Arrion Springs	Roosevelt	5-11	190
	Signed with Oregon			
5	 Brandon Simmons	Timberview	6-0	175
	Signed with Stanford			
6	 John Bonney	Lamar	6-0	165
	Signed with Texas			

Defensive Tackles (4)

1	 DeShawn Washington	Nederland	6-3	275
	Signed with Texas A&M			
2	 Zaycoven Henderson	Longview	6-2	270
	Signed with Texas A&M			
3	 Trey Lealaimatafao	Warren	6-0	265
	Signed with LSU			
4	 D.J. Williams	Lufkin	6-4	275
	Signed with Kansas			

Offensive Linemen (4)

1	 Kealvin Davis	Lakeview Centennial	6-4	255
	Signed with Texas A&M			
2	 Koda Martin	Marvel	6-5	265
	Signed with Texas A&M			
3	 Demetrius Knox	FW All Saints	6-5	300
	Signed with Ohio State			
4	 Jovan Pruitt	Bishop Dunne	6-6	290
	Signed with Arkansas			

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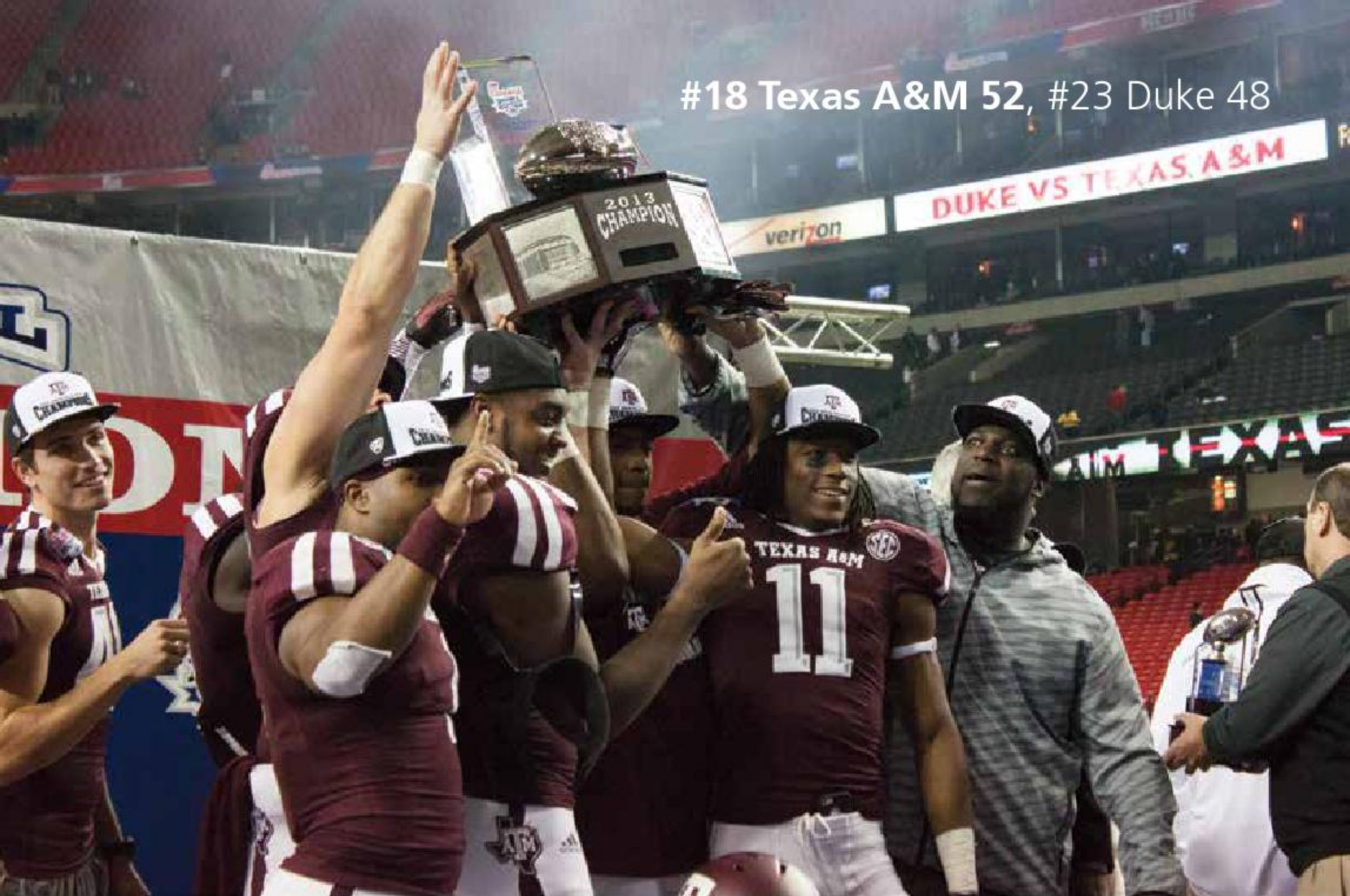


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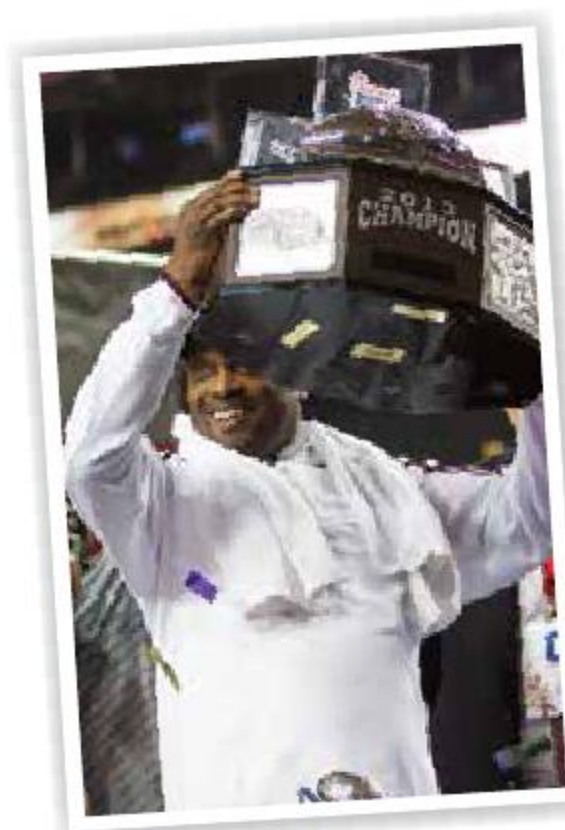
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THE COMEBACK

Greatest comeback in Aggie football history!



The Aggies' amazing comeback on New Year's Eve had all the makings of a Hollywood movie. Starting with a walk through in the Atlanta Convention Center a little more than an hour before the game, the football team strolled through a sea of maroon-clad fans reaching out to touch one of their heroes as they made their way to the Georgia Dome. Pulling up the rear, surrounded by security and with his hoodie pulled over his head, like a prize fighting boxer, was Johnny Manziel. He had a serious scowl on his face, showing that this was all business for him, and it was obvious that he was focused on the job at hand.

The Aggies came into the game as a double-digit favorite, while the Blue Devil team was anxious to show that their ten-win season was no fluke. The Ags carried

an SEC swagger earned from competing against the best in the country. This would be a victory lap of sorts for #2, and the Aggies knew Duke didn't stand a chance.

Johnny sat on the bench before the first kickoff, staring across the field very much like a fighter waiting to come out of his corner. After receiving the opening kickoff, Manziel guided the Aggies down the field all the way to the 23 yard line before penalties, a dropped pass, and a missed field goal sent the team to the sideline and gave the Devils hope that they could stop the high-powered Aggie offense.

It didn't take long for the Duke offense to get fired up as they cut through the Aggie defense on the ground and through the air, going 63 yards and scoring the





first touchdown of the game and sending the huge contingent of Duke fans into a frenzy. Johnny gathered the Aggie offense and tried to fire them up as the Devils cruised down the field. He was not about to lose his final collegiate game!

The Aggies were limited to a 45-yard field goal by Lambo on their next series, while the Devils put together a 79-yard drive that resulted in another touchdown, putting Duke up 14-3. It was obvious the Aggies were in trouble as their third possession ended with a blocked punt, setting Duke up at the Aggie 24. The Devils took advantage by scoring again to increase the lead to 18.

Finally, the Aggies got things into gear on the following drive. They took the ball 75 yards, mixing the running and passing game, which produced their first touchdown on a 23-yard pass from Johnny to Travis Labhart that pulled the Aggies within 11. The Ags' celebration was short-lived, however, as three plays later Anthony Boone connected with Jamison Crowder on a 59-yard bomb, increasing Duke's lead back to 18 points. It was evident that Duke was not going to let up, and the Aggie defense had not stopped them all day. So, in the next series, at fourth and goal on the four yard line, Sumlin decided to go for it. Johnny did not disappoint, finding Labhart in the end zone to keep the Aggies in the game.

Now that the Aggies' offense had started to get into a rhythm, they needed a defensive stop, but the Devils again cut through their porous defense. They went 75 yards, finishing the drive with a 25-yard touchdown run by Snead, after the Aggies lost a video challenge on a fourth-and-one on the preceding play. With the Devils up 35-17, it looked like the Ags might have a chance to close the gap with 2:31 left in the half, but the Dukies surprised A&M on the next kickoff and recovered an onside kick to set themselves up at the 50 with another opportunity to increase the lead. Boone led the Devils down to the one foot line, and it looked as if time might expire, but a time out and a gimme field goal sent the two teams to the locker room with a 38-17 score.

Sumlin would say after the game that he and the team had a conversation at halftime about doing their jobs. He told them they didn't have to "be THE MAN, but they needed to be A MAN!" Ben Malena and Johnny Manziel stepped up as leaders in the locker room at halftime and let their teammates know that if





they didn't believe they could come back in the second half and win, that they should just stay in the locker room.

With Duke taking possession in the second half and the defense's inability to stop the Blue Devils, few Aggie fans believed the Aggies could make a comeback. The Dukies once again took the ball and drove it into Aggie territory, but the defense made a huge stop on third and short, and Duke decided to go for it on fourth down. The Aggies' pressure on Boone resulted in an incomplete pass, giving the defense their first stop of the game and energizing the Aggie sideline and the 12th Man!

The Ags spread the ball around in the next series as Manziel completed passes to Malcome Kennedy and Mike Evans, while Ben Malena and Johnny got big gains on the ground, setting up the play of the year. Manziel stepped back in the pocket on second and seven from Duke's 19. He stepped up, hurdled a Duke defender, scurried backwards, sprinted to his left, and found Labhart wide open for his third touchdown of the day. It was "magic"—Johnny Football doing what only Johnny Football can do! The crowd went nuts, and for the first time, the Aggies looked like they could really come back and win.

The Devils quickly drove into Aggie territory, but Toney Hurd Jr.'s big stop on third down forced the Devils to attempt a 48-yard field goal that sailed wide left, giving the Aggies the ball again with all of the momentum. Johnny Manziel dissected the Blue Devil defense with pass completions to Walker and Kennedy, and two huge plays by Cameron Clear set up the next touchdown. Tra Carson raced around the edge for 21 yards and an Aggie TD that finished off the 70-yard drive and made the score 38-31.

Duke then drove the ball the length of the field, but on third and goal, Clay Honeycutt and Ivan Robinson stopped Duke short of the goal line and forced a field goal that extended the Blue Devils' lead to 10. The Ags took over at the 35 after a kick out of bounds, and the offensive line took control. The Aggies chewed up big yards on the ground via LaQuvionte Gonzalez and Ben Malena, while Labhart and Evans made big catches to set up the team at the three yard line. Johnny outraced the safety to the pylon and crashed into the media well, bringing the Aggies within three with 12:48 left in the game.

The Devils would not go away; they took the ball and went 75 yards in six







minutes as David Reeves tight-rope-walked the sideline to score on a 21-yard touchdown play.

Trey Williams gave the Ags great field position after a 33-yard kickoff return. Malcome Kennedy made a big 20-yard reception, setting up Derel Walker's 44-yard touchdown reception on an amazing pitch and catch that gave the Aggies a one possession game. With 5:44 left in the game, the Aggies needed a defensive stop to give them a chance to win. The 12th Man came alive trying to will the team to win. On second and five at the Duke 49, Boone dropped back to pass, set his feet, and fired a pass that was cut off by Toney Hurd Jr., who raced 54

yards, high stepped past the diving Duke QB at the 9, and finished the pick-six interception, giving the Aggies their first lead of the night.

The biggest comeback in Aggie football history was just 3:33 from happening. The Aggies just needed one more stop. With 1:30 left in the game, Duke QB Anthony Boone heaved a 40-yard pass to #3, his favorite target, and Deshazor Everett slapped the ball away at the last second to save a touchdown. On the next play, Everett blitzed from his corner spot and got ahold of Boone, spinning him around as he threw the ball in desperation to Nate Askew, who made the game-winning interception to seal

the victory for the Aggies. With the best player in college football on the sideline, it was the Aggie defense that stepped up and made the plays to clinch the victory.

It took amazing effort from every player on the team. The Aggies never quit, and as Johnny took a knee and the final seconds rolled off the clock, the 12th Man in the stadium, the viewers around the world, and the 125 football players and coaches witnessed the greatest comeback in Aggie football history! What a way to send off Johnny Football! The world watched as Aggie Football showed why we say, "I've seen 'em lose and I've seen 'em win, but I've never seen them quit!" Gig'em!

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baseball preview

INTERVIEW WITH COACH CHILDRESS

BY ROB HAVENS '88

Tell us a little bit about your players, what you've discovered in the fall, and what we can look forward to in the spring.

We've got an awful lot of experience back, and last year we went through a challenging schedule with 24 freshman and sophomores. Had to grow them up on the job and along the way and felt like down the stretch that they came together and stayed together and finished strong. The fall was good from the standpoint of experience, and guys taking care of their business, and helping the new guys come in and feel a part of things. We have several new guys that are going to make impacts as well. We brought in five junior college transfers, and we've got some high school kids that are good players and are going to find a way to help us along the way. As far as pitching, I feel like we've got a lot of experience back in Daniel Mengden, who had the opportunity to play for Team USA, and was our number one last year. Parker Ray kind of emerged as an incredible starter for us down the stretch; beat Vanderbilt in the conference tournament, shut them out, and had a good start in the regional. Grayson Long is a guy that was kind of

our number four last year, that had a great fall and would be our number three if we started tomorrow. Corey Ray is a junior that probably has as good of stuff as anybody on our team, and Hayden Howard, I think, are two that are competing for other starting spots. Obviously, we have Jason Jester back, our closer, who set a school record for saves in a season and will set a career record this year, I would expect. Matt Kent is back as well; kind of a mainstay for us out of the bullpen, another strike throwing lefty. A.J. Minter had off-season surgery; was power arm lefty that we expect bigger things out of and didn't get to throw this fall. He's been throwing this winter. He's got a great arm, was a set-up man for Jester last year. Rex Hill red-shirted and is a lefty from Tomball that had Tommy-John before he got here, had a great fall. A couple of freshmen, Mark Ecker out of San Antonio, Ryan Hendrix out of Houston, both right-handers, will be a big part of what we are going to do. Positionally, we've got a lot of experience back behind the plate. Cole Lankford and Mitchell Nau are back. We've got a kid named Ronnie Gideon, a true freshman that was drafted, who's a big, strong, physical guy that can play third as well. Cole Lankford is back at first. We signed a junior college all-American, G.R. Hinsley, that can play first and play left. At second base, Blake Allemand is back as a junior, going to hit it at the top of our order; a very good offensive player. At short, Logan Taylor is going to be our short stop and Patrick McLendon will back him up. Logan Taylor played third for us a little bit last year, went out and had a great summer, and has been really good for us this fall. Third, Hunter Melton is back. He had a great run for us down the stretch last year, a big-bodied guy that has power. Logan Nottebrok is a junior college transfer from Temple Junior College, another 6'3", 230-lb. guy that is physical with the bat. In the outfield, Krey Bratsen is a senior that's back. He's got world-class speed, and we expect him to have a great senior year. Jace Statum is also a senior, a left-handed hitter that does everything we ask him to do. Jonathan Moroney is a sophomore that has lightening in his bat. J.B. Moss is another sophomore that didn't play a lot last year that's very athletic. A couple of freshman to



watch for are Nick Banks, who was the Houston hitter of the year last year from Tomball—he's got a great swing—and Ryne Birk, who's just a baseball player; also a left-handed hitter that's just a winner, that's going to find his way onto the field whether it's in the infield or the outfield. He's going to make us play him, I truly believe that. We've got a lot of experience back, got a lot of talent. We open up with 16 of our first 18 at home. We will get a chance to find out an awful lot about our team before we open conference.

With one season under your belt in the SEC, do you feel that your coaching style has had to change?

No, I think it's very similar to the Big 12. It's just unrelenting. To me, it would be like playing Baylor, Texas, and Oklahoma for ten straight weeks. Just every weekend you're going to face the other team's best. You've got to play at a very high level. I think our challenge as a coaching staff, and it was one that we knew going in, was our job to keep our guys pointed forward. There's going to be bad days, there's going to be bad weekends, and our job is to keep them pointed forward on the task at hand that day and not let them worry about their last at bat, or yesterday, or last week. I think that's the coaches' challenge in the SEC based on the thirty game schedule.

Were you proud of how this team finished out last season?

I was. I mean collectively, as a whole, when you look at the whole season it was a disappointment. 34-29 and 13-16; that's not the bar at which we are trying to reach here at Texas A&M, but I was proud that they stayed together. I think that 95 percent of other teams that go through the stretch that we went through in the middle splinter and fall apart; our guys stayed together and finished strong. Last year to me was almost a tale of three seasons. We started out 18-8; in the middle we went 4-14; and then we rallied and played a tough finish but were 12-7 down the stretch. That 4-14 included, number one, a tough schedule in the middle and, number two, the loss of two guys that we weren't able to overcome in Mikey Reynolds and Cole Lankford. Obviously, we got back together and finished strong when those two got back into the lineup, but when you lose your short stop and your three-hole hitter, that's tough to overcome.



There are not many teams that can plug someone else in that is your lead-off hitter, and your short stop, and your three-hole hitter. Our guys did the best that we could do and we got those guys back and finished strong. We also had a revolving door in our rotation. Kyle Martin struggled in the middle of the year, and we had to take him back to the bullpen. Thankfully for us, Parker Ray emerged as a guy that wasn't just able to step in, but step in and be dominant. Daniel Mengden evolved, kept getting better, and evolved into a true Friday night guy. Once those two things happened, we got those two position players back and Parker Ray jumped into the two-hole for us, then we were able to make a move there at the end.





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softball preview

INTERVIEW WITH COACH EVANS
BY ROB HAVENS '88

Tell us about the make-up of this team compared to last year.

A lot of seniors; last year we had two senior starters, and this year we have six. We have eight seniors total, so it's a lot of leadership. Last year's captains were juniors, and now they're seniors. We lost our all-American battery of Mel Dumezich and Meagan May, so right now we are trying to feel our way in terms of how our pitchers are going to do and who's going to be out there with the bulk of the work. But it's an athletic group, lots of depth, and lots of numbers just in size. We've got 22 on our roster, which is a huge roster, but very athletic and lots of combinations and different things that we can do in a starting lineup.

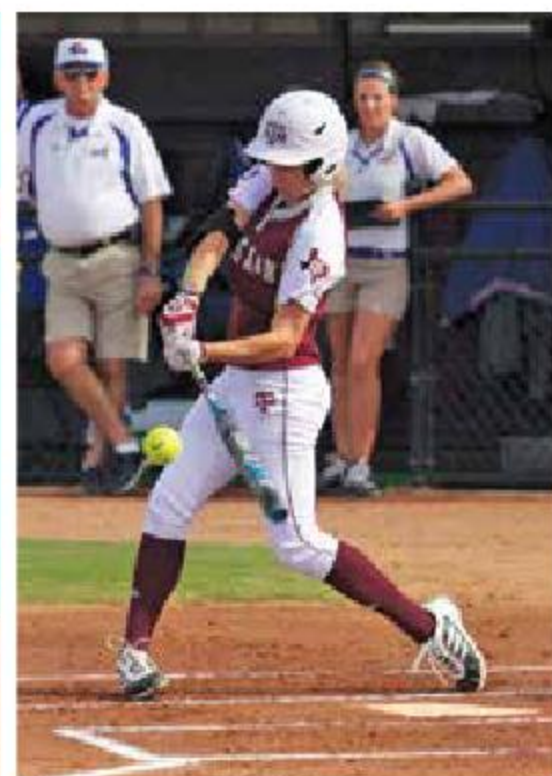
Can you name some players who you've seen really step up so far?

In our freshmen class, we've got several who have done a nice job. Abby Donnell is from Wichita Falls, Texas and she's done a great job on the mound. She's a hitter and center fielder; I think she's shined most on the pitcher's mound and has done a nice job for us, and I think she's someone who could legitimately get in there in the spring and get some innings for us and help us. April Ryan is a freshman who played at Keller High School. She's an infielder and can play short stop and second base. I think she gives us some depth out there, and really good range at second, and is a lefty hitter. Really smart on the bases, has done a nice job there. Celena Massey, a walk-on from Smithson Valley, I think has been a pleasant surprise in terms of managing pitchers and receiving. She has started to get more comfortable

at the plate and has shown power at the plate. Reagan Boenker, who's a local kid out of Bryan High School with great power, can play a lot of different positions. I think the key with Reagan is that we have to figure out a couple of positions to have her working, as opposed to how she plays every infield position and catches; I think right now she's sort of a jack-of-all-trades. We need to try to zero in and figure out which position she'll really excel at and where she can get playing time. Those are the freshmen; Katie Marks transferred in from South Carolina and will get immediate playing time. She throws the ball hard; she's the hardest thrower on our team and has had SEC pitching experience, and Rachel Fox has had Big 12 pitching experience. So, we have a lot of new faces and a lot of talent to work with.



ROB HAVENS '88 / SARAH PYATT '14



Now that you have a full season in the new conference under your belt, can you compare the SEC and the Big 12?

The best teams are as good. So when we are in the Big 12, we are battling for a championship. You've got to go through Oklahoma, Texas, and Baylor, and those are really good teams; so that's equal to Tennessee, Florida and Alabama. You can see that Oklahoma won the world series and Tennessee took second. So, the biggest difference is just the depth throughout the conferences.

What are the toughest teams you all will face this season?

I think that the perennial powerhouses will be the toughest. I think Tennessee, Alabama and Georgia are going to be really, really good; Florida's always good. It's hard to pick them out because there are no weak teams. You look at South Carolina; they made it to the post season last year for the first time in years. Kentucky now is in the mix, and Mississippi State; there were really only two teams out of thirteen that didn't make it post season last year, and those were Auburn and Ole Miss. Auburn just hired a new coach, the guy from Arizona State. He's won national championships there, so now, all of a sudden, he's at Auburn; you know that's just going to turn around in a heartbeat. Everybody's going to be good. The SEC is just that competitive.

What changes will you have to make from last year to be successful this season?

Last year I thought we didn't play great defense and it hurt us; this year we are just heavy in the senior class on defense, so I expect our defense to be better. Pitching is a question mark because of losing our All-American, Mel Dumezich. Offensively, we return some of those great hitters; Amber Garza at third base; Emily Albus, a speedy, lead-off and centerfield; Cali Lanphear, who was an All-American as a freshman last year; Cassie Tysarczyk hits a long ball; Jenna Stark hits a long ball; that whole class. Taran Tyler solidifies our infield at short stop. So, we will really be relying on our senior class. What will look differently, I think, is what needs to look differently. Our infield, our defense needs to be more consistent, needs to be stronger, and we need more depth in pitching. So this year I think we've got more depth. We don't have that one superstar, so we will

probably pitch by committee, with Lauren Ainsley, who won the championship game in the regionals, and Katie Marks, Rachel Fox, and Abby, who I've talked about; and we've got two other kids as well. We've got a lot of options, and I think with pitching it will be more like maybe someone will throw three or four innings, and then the next one, and then the next one.

You've been able to rely on one ace pitcher the last few years. Will it be a challenge this year for you to decide when to make a change in the circle?

Yeah, and I think that's the hardest part of coaching. Maybe any manager or softball coach would say that the decisions of whether we pull this starter, do we have a closer, who's a good middle reliever, how does their temperament and skill set match up with are you good in the middle, are you good at the end, do you have that mentality of a starter, let me run with it are challenging. I think that's a really challenging part of the game, and that's something that we'll be dealing with a lot this year.

As a coach, do you enjoy piecing together a different set of talented players and changing your coaching style to get the job done?

Yeah, I think it's fun. I like the challenge. I love my team. I love coaching this crew; they're very athletic, so it's fun to have different options to be able to plug people in. Sometimes you get a team and you're like, 'okay, this is it, we have talent; but if we get an injury, we could be in big trouble.' But that's not a worry for me; it's not a concern with me. It's fun, though, to try to put the pieces together. I think that's always a fun part of it.

I saw Mel in the dugout the other day. Has she been helping?

Yeah, she's getting her degree and finishing up in May, so she's our fifth-year student assistant, and it's great. We love having her in the dugout. She's such a huge part of this program and really has been the heart and soul in many ways to this team. So for her to be done, but to still be present, is really valuable to our team. Just her presence out there, our kids all respect her and look up to her. She's put in all the hard work and they know what she brought to the table. She can speak up and say things to them and they'll respond, so it's nice.

[GAME 9: A&M 57, UTEP 7]



▲ PHOTOS OF THE GAME



The Aggies vs. Miners game was supposed to be a homecoming for Aggie transfer Jameill Showers. Unfortunately, Showers suffered a shoulder injury the week before and spent the night on the sideline watching his new team get blown out. After a slow offensive start, Johnny Manziel rallied the troops and threw four touchdown passes while adding two more on the ground. In total, the offense had 564 yards. The Texas A&M defense forced four turnovers, including two interceptions by Howard Matthews. The Aggie receiving corps was led by Travis Labhart who had four catches for 83 yards and two scores. Floyd Raven blocked a punt that rolled out of the back of the end zone for a safety, marking the first time since 2008 that the special teams unit had generated two points on a blocked punt. The Aggies trailed early in the game but responded with 55 straight points to beat UTEP 57-7. Manziel left the game with 7:39 left in the 3rd quarter. Freshmen Kenny Hill led the Aggie offense down the field for its final score of the night.

[GAME 10: A&M 51, MISSISSIPPI ST 41]



▲ PHOTOS OF THE GAME



Saturday, November 9 will always be remembered as Johnny Football's last game on Kyle Field. The Aggies claim the program's 700th win in a 51-41 victory over the Bulldogs in an emotional game in front of the 3rd largest crowd to ever watch the Aggies play on Kyle Field. Manziel did not disappoint as he threw for five touchdowns and led the Aggies to a 51-27 lead over Mississippi State in the 4th quarter. Unfortunately, the dogs would not go away and drew within ten points before the Aggies finally squashed their comeback by recovering an onside kick to seal the deal. Mike Evans broke the school's single-season record with 116 receiving yards to finish the night with 1,263 total yards for the season. Malcolm Kennedy and Travis Labhart had two touchdown receptions apiece to lead the wide receivers. As the final seconds ticked off the clock, Johnny ran across the field and jumped into the stands to sing the Aggie War Hymn and Saw 'Em Off with the 12th Man for the last time in Aggieland.

[GAME 11: LSU 34, A&M 10]



▲ PHOTOS OF THE GAME



The Aggies went to Baton Rouge looking for payback after last season's close loss to the Tigers. With a BCS bowl still within reach, the Aggies took the field on a cold, rainy afternoon looking to punch a ticket to New Orleans and the Sugar Bowl. Unfortunately, it was not to be, as the Tiger defense became the only team to beat Johnny Manziel two years in a row. Suffering from an undisclosed thumb injury, Manziel battled through the pain to try to lead the Aggies to victory in front of a hostile LSU crowd that was hungry to take down the Heisman winner. The team's ten-game winning streak on the road ended with the 34-10 upset of the No. 9 Aggies. The LSU running game went up and down the field, rolling up 324 yards, while Mettenberger was efficient through the air completing eleven of twenty passes for 193 yards and two touchdowns. Derel Walker was the lone bright spot on a dreary day as he collected six catches for 130 yards and the only Aggie touchdown.

[GAME 12: MISSOURI 28, A&M 21]



▲ PHOTOS OF THE GAME



The final game of the regular season found the Aggies making a trip to Columbia to take on the Missouri Tigers, who were playing for a trip to represent the East in an SEC Championship. The Aggie defense played well as they held the high-powered Missouri offense to only 28 points. Suffering from a messed up leg and a nagging thumb injury, Johnny Manziel was held in check for a second straight week and the Aggie offense came up just short by putting only 21 points on the board. Brandon Williams led the Aggie running game with six carries and 57 yards, while Travis Labhart had seven catches and 81 yards. Steven Jenkins led the Aggie defense with twelve tackles that gave the Aggies a chance to win. With 3:34 to go in the game, Henry Josey scored the go-ahead 57-yard touchdown that put the Tigers up for good and left the Aggie post-season bowl destination in the hands of the powers-that-be on Bowl Selection Sunday.

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This issue's Rec Sports feature highlights two of America's favorite recreational activities that have become competitive sports: Ultimate and Bowling.

Ultimate Club

BY ROB HAVENS '88

Ultimate combines the fun of throwing a Frisbee®, or sport disc, with the running and scoring you would find on a smaller version of a football field. A regulation game has seven players on each team.

The objective is to move the disc down the field without dropping a pass or throwing the Frisbee® out of bounds and then to get into the endzone. Contact is not allowed, and the team scores a point when completing a pass into their opponent's endzone, which is 25 yards deep. The field is 70 yards by 40 yards and players race around throwing, catching, diving, defending, and having a great time.

Club Officer Matt Bennett, who is currently ranked as the #5 Ultimate player in the country, says, "Most new members have no previous experience and have no idea how to play before trying out for the team." Matt started playing in high school and fell in love with the game. Currently, there are



about 55 members on the team—25 on A team and 30 on B team. They practice three days per week for a couple of hours and talk a lot of strategy. Bennett says, "Defense is so big in Ultimate, and a player that loves to play defense is a player that you want on your team."

Bennett really enjoys the camaraderie on the team and has a great time as they travel around the country competing. Money provided by the school pays for most of the hotel costs the team incurs, and the rest of their expenses are paid by dues the members pay at the beginning of the year.

Bowling Club

BY ROB HAVENS '88

What could be better than going bowling with your friends? Gregory Cook, president of the Bowling Club, says, "It is always special to represent something bigger than yourself when you compete, and there is nothing better than being

a representative of Texas A&M." For Cook, who has been bowling since he was six years old, competing with his friends and traveling around the country bowling for A&M is a fun and rewarding experience.



Cook says the club attracts both diehard, competitive bowlers as well as casual bowlers just looking to have a good time. The club has roughly forty members, and they practice a couple of times per week. Gregory plays at least four times per week and says that the key to being a good bowler is lots of practice. According to him, some professionals will bowl around 100 games per week.

Cook's favorite tournament is the annual trip to Notre Dame in January. The team members get to spend their down time in South Bend, IN checking out the beautiful architecture, such as the Basilica on campus and Touchdown Jesus. This spring the team will compete in four tournaments, including the Hoosier Classic in Indianapolis, the largest collegiate tournament of the year.

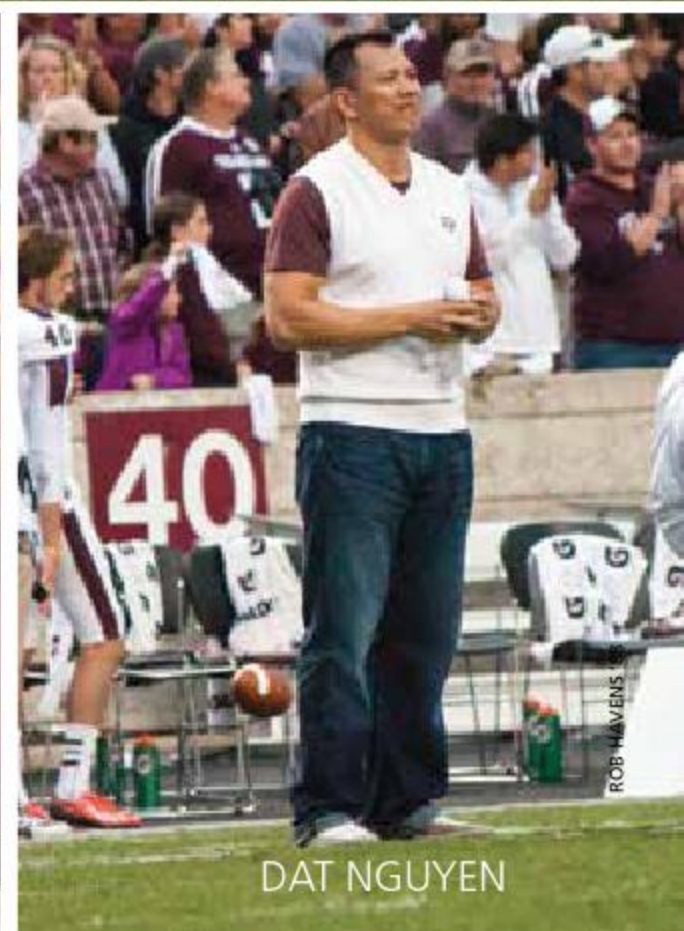
The club is funded by members, the Department of Recreational Sports, and donations from family and friends. In addition, they sometimes have sponsors—primarily bowling ball and equipment manufacturers—that provide discounted bowling balls and equipment.




the 12th man



MICHAEL WACHA




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